Wasteful Expenditure by Embassy at Brussels

2664. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the staff strength of the erstwhile India Trade Centre (ITC) at Brussels was reduced in October, 1995 and merged with the Commerce Wing of the Embassy;

(b) whether the ITC occupies a rented building but the Embassy at Brussels did not terminate the lease of the building, which was not required and thereby incurred a wasteful expenditure of Rs. 88.22 lakh on rent; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. Staff Strength of the erstwhile India Trade Centre (ITC) was reduced from 11 to 9 in October, 1995. However, actual merger took place in May, 1996.

(b) and (c) ITC was accommodated in a rented building till December, 2000 as the main chancery building did not have enough space to accommodate the ITC personnel. Since July 2001, after additional space was constructed in the Chancery premises, ITC personnel now function from the Chancery.

Extradition Treaties

2665. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to sign extradition treaties with more countries of the world ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. India has already signed extradition treaties with 16 countries (Belgium, Bhutan, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Mongolia, Nepal, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan). The texts of the extradition treaties with Philippines, Poland, Spain and Malaysia have been initialled at the official level, but the treaties can be signed only after the Contracting States in each case complete the requisite process of obtaining internal approvals.